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Thesis

THE PROBLEM OF ACCELERATION AND PROMOTION IN BEVERLY, MASSACHUSETTS

Submitted by
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(B.S. in Ed., Boston University, 1924)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Master of Education

1931

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Introductory Statement:

Although the flexible system of promotion has been in use in the Beverly Schools in grades 2 to 6, since 1915, many questions of doubt are raised as to the value of such a system. Within the past decade educators and parents alike have often, without just cause, placed the blame for academic failures among those pupils accelerated at the door of this accelerated promotional system.

The claim raised by the objectors has been a question as to whether or not most of these pupils who had been advanced rapidly, would have done better school work in the upper grammar grades and in high school subjects if their progression had been natural.

Even today, we hear the criticism leveled at this system, by parents who have been disappointed in the high school academic attainment of their own children. Without careful thought, the cause for this average attainment is laid to this fast promotion in the grades.

Being one of those who raised the question in 1924 and 1925, the writer felt that he could best serve by summarizing the studies already made within our system; namely that of Mr. James Gearon in 1925 and that of the School Committee in 1928 and by studying further the progress of an accelerated group of pupils and comparing it with that of a regularly promoted group through a period of six years.

By this summarizing of data and the explanation of the flexible grading movement the writer expects to show the value of such a system if it is properly administered.

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I Discussion of the Aims and Objectives of the Flexible Grading System.

The flexibility of promotion may seem to be a new venture in education, but the idea itself has been known for many years.

In that this flexibility is a provision for individual differences among people, let us consider flexibility in its earliest stages.

We find in reading Plato that as early as his day, he was advocating different types of education for the various classes or castes. Plato advocated that the artisans or lower class should not receive an education particularly if they planned to follow a trade, while the warrior class or middle group would study literature and the esthetic studies, and the higher class or magistrates as they were called indulged in meta-physics, philosophy and the sciences. Thus, we are aware that even in Plato's time, provisions were being made for the differences between groups or castes.

If we tried to imagine what this world would be like if everyone had absolute uniformity of abilities we would marvel at the value of individuality.

Hollingsworth said that "instead of striving to force all children to learn the same things at the same time, in the same way because that would be cheap and convenient, we ought to foster individuality in its socially valuable aspects so that the charm of human contact may be increased.

To the connoisseur of human nature, the suggestion that all children be reduced to similarity is as dreadful as the suggestion to all connoisseurs of art that all pictures and intaglios be turned out identical by the uniform factory process." [1]

Before free schools were established a limited number of human beings were educated. That is, there were a few selected individuals attending school who studied abstract matter which had no tangible relation to the life of these individuals.

Then when free schools were opened with the idea of solving the problems of education in the democracy, another problem arose. All children were not only provided with education, but were forced to take advantage of it. It was at this point that the dreaded truant officer came into the school system.

Although various reasons for avoiding education were given, such as illness, economic pressure, no clothing, the outstanding reason seemed to be that this curriculum was not providing for individual differences. Not only did the early curriculum fall short in the adaptation of subject matter but it failed to recognize special defects and aptitudes. For example, "the child who can never learn to sing is compelled to pursue singing even after school." [2]

Huxley wrote in 1868 and expressed the conditions

1 Hollingsworth, Leta S. "Special Talents and Defects" Page 196

2 Hollingsworth, Leta S. " " " Page 200

which seem to exist because of the education of everyone in the same way.

"A few voices are lifted up in favor of the doctrine that masses should be educated because they are men and women with unlimited capacities of being, doing, and suffering, and it is as true now as it ever was, that the people perish for lack of knowledge." [3]

Educational authorities immediately recognized the short-comings of the educational system which treated all human beings in the same manner when it came to the dispensing of subject matter. We find that the first administrative recognition of individual differences came not to those of superior intelligence but to the extremely stupid or feeble-minded. This recognition came solely from the fact that this type of pupil was incapable of normal progress and was an out and out disciplinary problem. Becoming discipline problems in the regular grades, the teachers claimed that these pupils were intolerable burdens and sought relief from the school administrators.

The first evidence of the recognition of the "pedagogical misfits" as they were called came in a professional teachers' meeting in 1872. In Cleveland in 1890 two classes were established for children presenting difficulty in discipline.

It was natural that the movement to adjust the school

[3] Edward R. Maguire "The Group-Study Plan" Introduction.

programs and subject matter to these individual children who had shortcomings that would hinder them in taking their place in society, would gain much momentum and progress. This type of child appeals to the sympathy and philanthropy of the adult, and the hindrance caused to the work of normal pupils by the presence of these mentally deficient pupils in the same class aroused much action on the part of educators. It was not long before there were special classes for these mentally deficient and a new type of pedagogy for the subnormal child.

After progress had been made in caring for the lower end of the mental scale, some leaders claimed that the differentiation was at least one-sided, that a proper balance should be affected. The children on the upper end of the scale who were more fortunate than their brethren surely should have special attention.

Many practical school administrators have given the impetus to caring for these superior children by their many experimental schemes such as flexible grading, special classes for "gifted children" [4] and individual instruction. In our country reports show that Goddard, Terman, and Whipple have done much to develop the interest of administrators in providing special educational facilities for the gifted children.

The arguments for these special educational facilities

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[4] Term applied by Dr. Guy Whipple

for bright children are social and individualistic. It is claimed to be a fact that society cannot afford the loss entailed when the bright child does not receive its development according to its individual ability. Individually, every child, whether subnormal, normal, or supernormal has a right to the education which is best suited to his abilities or his needs. Morally, the bright child should acquire the right habits of work which are not forthcoming if he is forced to work in the same class and at the same rate of speed of the normal or slow child. Many resultant undesirable habits of indolence, carelessness and inattention are often formed by the bright child under aforementioned class organization.

Many different provisions have been made and many experiments tried in the various communities throughout the United States to make school promotion fit different intellectual grades.

The history of injecting flexibility into the regular grade system first comes to our attention as early as 1868-69-71-72-73 when Dr. W. T. Harris before the National Education Society presented the advantages of a system of school progress whereby pupils were promoted at short intervals. The main point stressed by Dr. Harris was that this system of promotion held the brighter pupils to the work which they were capable of doing and kept them from acquiring habits of laziness.

In 1886, Mr. W. J. Shearer, Superintendent of Elizabeth, N.J., formed a plan of promotion whereby three or four sections were formed within each of his eight grades so that pupils of nearly the same abilities were grouped together. Each group was allowed to accomplish as much as it could and individuals promoted to the section above as soon as they demonstrated the ability for the same. This promotion was made without any formal examination.

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1891, we find the "Double Track Plan" in grades four to nine. Some pupils were able to do six years work in four years, while others did six years in six years' time. A special coach teacher provided assistance for both the dull and bright children and much transferring was done from one track to the other. It was reported that during seventeen years, 10,203 pupils[5] graduated from these schools and 7% completed six years work in four years, while 28% accomplished the work in five years and 50% progressed in the regular time and 15% took seven years or more. In 1910 we find that the Cambridge plan was changed so that the first seven years were divided in three sections for each year and the eighth grade was divided into two sections. Thus we have under this new plan twenty-three sections in the first eight grades with a chance for transferring when the need presented itself from one section to another. Many modifications grew out of this

5 School Committee Report, Cambridge, Mass. 1908-1910.

Cambridge Plan as we note in the "Le Mars Plan"; "Odebolt Plan"; and "Portland Oregon Plan". [6]

In 1894, "The Double Tillage Plan" of Woburn, Mass. showed that the work or each grade was covered in the first half year and then worked over in greater detail the second half. This system was abandoned in 1903 except in the first two grades, due to the increase of the subject matter in the elementary school curriculum.

Mr. J. H. VanSickle of Denver, Colorado in 1895 presented his "Enrichment Plan". The time saving element was given but little emphasis, but the brighter children were given opportunities and encouraged to do more extensive and intensive work than the rest of the class. The bright children worked while the other children recited.

The year 1900 brought many plans for flexible promotion,- among them the "Santa Barbara Concentric Plan". The grades are divided into three sections called "A", "B" and "C" which were all required to master the minimum essentials of the curriculum. The "B" were required to do more than the "C" group and the "A" group more than the "B" group. Thus, if an "A" pupil of any grade had completed the work of the assigned grade he was placed in the "C" section of the next higher grade. Transfers from one section to another within a grade were made at any time it was deemed necessary.

The "Large School Plan" sometimes called the "Group

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[6] Nineteenth Yearbook by the National Society for the Study of Education Part II Page 14

System" was introduced about this time into Chicago and New York. The particular aim of this plan was to allow bright pupils to advance as rapidly as possible in those subjects in which they excelled. The divisions or groups were formed on a basis of the ability of pupils.

In 1901 P. W. Search presented the "Pueblo Plan". Mr. Search said, "Experience shows conclusively that even in a well graded class there are some pupils who can do three times as much work as others." [7] The emphasis of this plan however, was placed upon the coaching and instructing of the backward children rather than on acceleration of the bright pupil. The plan was rated as very expensive.

At Baltimore in 1902 the "Preparatory Center Plan" came to light. At the completion of the sixth grade with distinct success, the children were brought to a common class to do the work of the seventh, eighth and part of the ninth grade.

In 1907 and 1908 Van Sickle and C. N. Kendall presented arguments before the National Council of the N.E.A. for the education of bright children. The Report of Van Sickle, Wilmer, and Ayers on "Provisions for Exceptional Children in the Public Schools" in 1911 showed definitely which way the trend seemed to be heading at that time.

In 1911 the following localities were making some

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[7] Search, P. W. "An Ideal School" Page 12

provisions for bright children:- Boston Latin School; Providence, R.I.; Worcester, Mass.; Portsmouth, N.H.; Richmond, LaPorte, Crawfordsville, Goshen, Madison and Indianapolis, Indiana; Joliet and Aurora, Illinois; East Saginaw, Iron Mountain, Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Michigan; New Orleans, Louisiana; York and Lincoln, Nebraska; Lead, South Dakota; McAllister, Oklahoma; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Lake George and Warrensburg, New York.

Dr. F. E. Spalding in 1904 and 1914 adopted "The Newton Plan" which employed an unassigned teacher to whom children came for special instructor. Dr. Spalding endeavored to break down grade lines as barriers to the advancement of pupils.

Reports in the 24th year Book of the Society for the Study of Education - Part II show that about this time special segregated groups were organized in Everett, Massachusetts; Kansas City, Missouri; Cinncinnati, Ohio; Kalamazoo and Detroit, Michigan; Salt Lake City, Omaha; New York; Philadelphia; Providence; Spokane; Middletown, Connecticut; Highland Park, Michigan; Cicero, Illinois; Marshfield and West Altis, Wisconsin.

The following cities had provided for the education of gifted children:-

Berkeley, Los Angeles, and San Diego, California;

Meriden, Connecticut; Oak Park, Illinois; Indianapolis, Indiana; Kansas City, Missouri; Louisville, Kentucky; Boston and Worcester, Massachusetts; Battle Creek, Detroit, Grand Rapids and Jackson, Michigan; St. Paul, Minnesota; St.Louis, Missouri; Newark, New Jersey; New York City and Rochester, New York; Cleveland and Cinncinnati, Ohio.

However, before we terminate our present discussion of the history of this flexible grading system or fitting the school to the child, due recognition must be taken of Dr. Frederick Burk, that progressive and aggressive educator of State Teachers' College, San Francisco, who contributed so much in breaking down the absurd assumption that thirty or forty children all different could be educated on a theory that they are all alike.

Dr. Burk, when superintendent of schools in Santa Rosa, California, immediately put into practice his theory that each child is different, by abolishing in kindergarten the mechanical drills and set lessons and giving children a chance to play and to be individuals. This action of Dr. Burk came long before we ever heard of Madam Montessori and the idea of play and freedom in the kindergarden was a worthwhile and lasting contribution to education.

Again we find Dr. Burk as president of the State Normal School at San Francisco, now know as the State Teachers'

College, training the future teachers to realize that there are some very bright children, some very dull children and the rest were scattered in between with varying degrees of abilities. This theory which was nothing more than a matter of common sense was backed up by the proof gathered in giving careful tests in the various subjects.

Dr. Burk further contended that public schools failed to recognize this difference in abilities. He pointed out that in a typical American class room there are forty children, studying the same subject matter regardless of the interest of the child. The question raised in this particular was: Have we the right to force every child of the forty to go at the same rate of speed in everything he studies?

"The Lockstep" as it was named by Dr. Burk was due to the fact that the bright child is chained to the dull child, the fast to the slow, showed that the slow children become discouraged because the speed of the procession of learning is too fast for them. Many thousands of dollars are lost to the taxpayer because these slow pupils are non-promoted.

Then again we look at the other end of the column and find that the bright child chained to the dull child finds that he is moving too slowly. "They must go to their reading class day after day and listen to the duller children stumble over passages, when they have read the

entire book before the end of the first week. They must go to Arithmetic and listen again and again to things they have mastered a long time before."

Is it any wonder then that the brighter child under such circumstances becomes bored and tired and in all probability gets into mischief?

In 1913 Dr. Burk stumbled on a solution, but not until he became known as a "destructive critic of all existing educational methods." [8]

The proceedure can best be illustrated by using Arithmetic. First, it was determined how much Arithmetic a child should know when he finished the elementary schools and secondly this knowledge was divided into eight parts, one for each grade.

The work of each grade was divided into sections, so simplified that the work was self-instructive. Mimeographed sheets which gave minute instructions were used instead of text books.

After a section was finished, the child gave himself a test and if the results were satisfactory he received a regular test on the subject matter from the teacher. If the regular test was passed satisfactorily, he went on to the next section. In case of a failure, a reprimand was given the child for asking for the regular test until he was ready and then was given more work covering the same subject.

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[8] Educational Review, January, 1926. Page 26

In Dr. Burk's school pupils are worked at their own rate of speed and thus no one fails. Some pupils would do two years of arithmetic in one year. It must be borne in mind that a child received help from the teacher when it was needed. It was astonishing to find that a child might take over a year to do one grade's arithmetic and finish the following year's work in five months. Thus each child had to do everything, but did it in his own way and at his own rate of speed.

In spite of the criticism of Dr. Burk's plan that group class work was so valuable to a child that it was not good good policy to teach a child in his way, Dr. Burk's school gave group class work in social studies, etc. and because so much time was saved in teaching the tool subjects, arithmetic, spelling and reading in an individual way, much more time could be given to such things that children like, as dramatics, music, art, nature study, elementary science, etc.

Dr. Burk believed as John Dewey did, namely, that "education is not preparing for life, but is life itself." [9] In life we have work to do, with one piece finished we go on to the next without waiting for our neighbor. We simply keep working along at our own rate of speed and get there in the end.

From Dr. Burk's experiences, Miss Parkhurst developed the Dalton Plan of teaching which is known to the whole

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[9] Educational Review, January, 1926

educational world. The Dalton plan provides for a "sociological experiment rather than a curriculum experiment," [10] that is with its laboratory plan of study it tries to keep the school life more social than mechanical.

There are three basic principles in the Dalton plan, first, freedom; second, cooperation and interaction of group life or community living; and third, the proportion of effort to attainment, or budgeting of time. The Dalton Plan aims primarily to organize the "life of the school" and furnish it with a procedure which will be advantageous to the pupil in enjoying true community life, to build daily the habits needed for one's life outside of school, and to put child in command of his own resources, "to become master instead of a servant." The procedure of the Dalton Plan can be used regardless of the curriculum adhered to.

Under the Dalton Plan a pupil is given his work in a series of related jobs. This work is carefully outlined, sometimes by a teacher, often by a pupil, and can be completed within a school month of twenty days.

The Dalton Plan is applicable to any pupil of the school above and beginning with the fourth grade. The fourth grade is taken as the starting point because sufficient tool subjects have been taught and children can work independently.

A pupil may do all of his work, subject by subject, one subject at a time, or a little of one and much of another.

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[10] Parkhurst, Helen, "The Dalton Laboratory Plan."

A pupil is free to plan his own time and discover his own better methods of work. A "time-set" is used to make sure that the job set for sixty hours can be done by a slow pupil in that time.

Dr. Karl F. Muenzinger of Colorado University, says:

"If, in teaching according to the Dalton Plan, there are to be no more class periods; if the student may spend as much time in the geography laboratory as he pleases before he decides for himself to go to the science laboratory; if he can start this morning with history and tomorrow with French as his interest directs him--where will such unheard of independence get him to? Does not such a plan make study a prey of the variable moods and whims of the youth who should be guided wisely and firmly? This danger is more apparent than real since the Dalton Plan matches such a freedom with a greater definiteness as regards the subject matter than can be found in the usual school curriculum. The 'units' and 'job' of the Dalton Plan remind one very strongly of the task system of scientific management. Just as the industrial engineer has to study and analyze the work and the worker, and construct such tasks as will make 'a good day's work,' so the teacher under the new plan has to study and analyze the subject and student, and prepare 'units', a required number of which will make a week's or a month's work.

"The definiteness of such a task, or unit, enables the student to envisage his problem, and to know how fast he is progressing in his work. Unlike the worker under scientific management, however, he is not told to do this particular job and no other, but he is allowed to choose which job he may tackle this morning and to solve as much or as little of it as he wants only--all jobs for the month must be completed before he can start next month's work. When he starts to work on a chosen subject he has a definite 'set' towards his problem, the importance of which for the learning process cannot be overestimated, and this attitude has been brought about under best possible conditions. It is not the result of the ringing of a bell and a change of classrooms (how could we ever think this would turn the trick?), but it is the result of the student's own choice, determined by his desires and interests, on the one hand, and his needs as he himself sees them, on the other hand.

"The dangers that might be perceived in such a system of definite tasks (units and jobs) and strong incentives (progress charts) are offset by the freedom in the choice of subjects of a given day. It is in this combination of definiteness and freedom that the strength of the Dalton Plan lies. Under a properly conducted scientific management system, each worker becomes his own efficiency engineer; he studies every factor that influences his production; and he acquires

new habits and drops wasteful ones so as to increase his efficiency. Under the Dalton Plan, where freedom and definiteness are combined, each student is bound to study his methods and analyze his progress into factors than hinder or further it. He is led to study his own needs and possibilities, and to acquire the habits of work that are adapted to himself as well as to his subjects. May we not expect that he will find out much that will supplement the results of experimental education? [11]

Miss Parkhurst spread her new theory to England and Japan and today every European country is interested in the new idea of individual education.

Mr. Carleton Washburne, Illinois was a member of Dr. Burk's faculty. His Winnetka plan is perhaps a more practical outgrowth of Dr. Burk's plan applied to the public schools. In this plan a flexible promotion system is provided wherein the pupils pass in the subject whenever the work has been completed. Thus pupils may be in different grades in different subjects.

In reviewing the actual situation in United States, with regard to the caring for the individual differences in children, there seems to be two outstanding methods used, first, these children are either promoted rapidly or are given a course of study generally referred to as "enriched".

Rugg points out that about one hundred school systems,

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[11] 24th Yearbook, National Society for the Study of Education
Part II Page 93

representing various parts of the country are taking care of exceptional pupils by accelerating and enriched curriculum. Three-fifths of these communities provide for superior children by rapid promotion; one fourth hold them and enrich the curriculum, while one-sixth try to combine both the acceleration and the enriched curriculum. [12]

Rapid promotion merely means that the pupils of unusual "verbal intelligence" are permitted to complete a thoroughly "verbalistic curriculum" in fewer years than the normal or "average" pupil requires. This situation is not satisfactory as the standard curriculums have not been modified to fit the superior ability of these children.

With the enrichment of the curriculum one finds that more work like that of the conventional course is given or the method of presentation varies. Teachers supervise the preparation but the actual study is done by the child. Sometimes longer assignments are given or more elaboration of ideas is required of the brighter group. Much research work and socialized recitations are required of the bright group.

Many experiments in caring for the individual have been tried and the underlying principle of all modern administrative education must be flexibility.

Margaretta Voorhees said "New education seems to demand that children be considered by schools as complete individuals

[12] Rugg, Harold - "The Curriculum for Gifted Children" Page 97

and that they be studied from first hand information and present psychological knowledge, and that the whole system be adapted to their growing needs." [13]

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13 Progressive Education, April 1930. Page 113
(Margaretta Voorhees)

II. The Establishment of the Flexible Grading System in Beverly.

Before we advance further in this study let us consider the establishment of the flexible system in Beverly.

In 1914, our present superintendent, S. Howard Chace, was a pioneer in attempting to establish a system of promotion, so flexible that it would eliminate a great many non-promotions and correct a very disagreeable economic and social condition existing in our schools due to the yearly retardation of pupils under the promotional system in vogue at that time.

Thus in September, 1914, a forward movement was taken in our school system by the introduction of a new system of grading.

The superintendent's report of 1915 reports as follows:

"A new system of grading was introduced in some of the Beverly Schools last September. It is designed to aid in so adapting the work of the schools to the needs of the children that each pupil may have an opportunity to do the best work of which he is capable.

The course of study is being revised so that the work to be accomplished in each fourth of a normal school year is carefully outlined. In those schools where conditions warrant it, the pupils of a grade will be grouped in three divisions in essential school subjects such as reading,

arithmetic, language, etc. Between September and June one of these divisions will do three quarters of work outlined in the course of study, another will do four quarters--a normal amount--and the other division will do five quarters of work and will thereby gain one-fourth of a year's work every ten months. Pupils may be in one division one year and in another division the next, these groups being formed at the close of each year in June and each pupil being placed where he can do his best work. Individual re-adjustments may be made during the year as circumstances warrant."

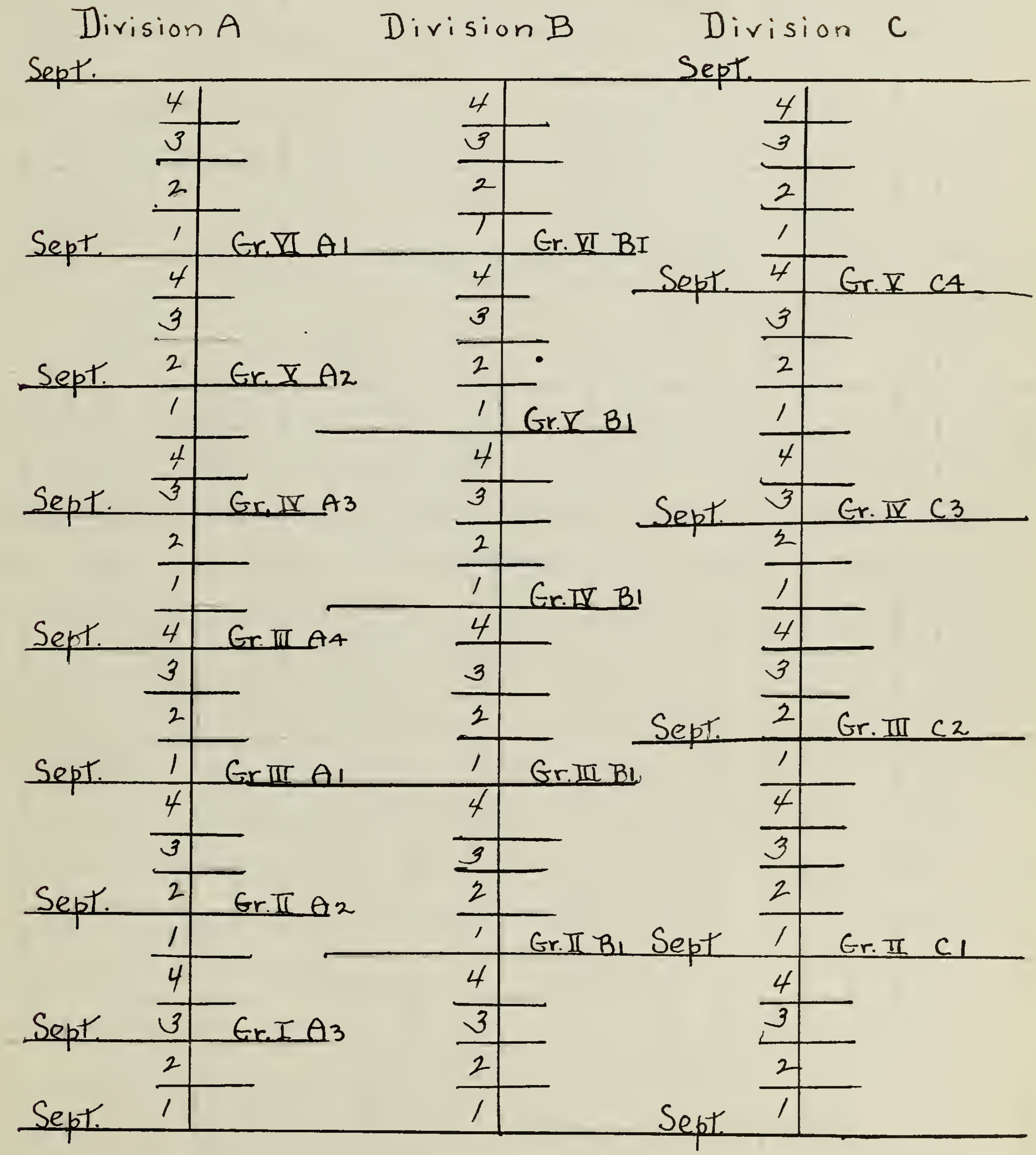
In this same report, the grading plan shows clearly how this new flexible grading system would operate.

"The Roman numerals preceded by the abbreviation "Gr" and followed by an Arabic numeral, printed just above the long lines, indicate the section of the course of study which will be begun each September in each of the three divisions.

In "Division A" for example,"Gr. 1 A3" means that in September there will be a group of pupils started on the third quarter of the course of study for Grade I. "Gr. II A2" means that on the following September this group will begin the second quarter's work in Grade II, etc. The number of spaces formed by short lines between the longer (September) lines indicate the number of sections of the course of study that will be attempted by pupils in these

GRADING PLANS

Grades I - VI



divisions as stated above, viz: Division A will do three quarters, division B four quarters, and division C five quarters. It will be noted that there are four points on the plan where two divisions start on the same quarter's work in September; viz: Gr. II, B 1 and C 1; Gr. III, A 1 and B 1; Gr. IV, A 3 and C 3; Gr. VI, A 1 and B 1. These offer favorable opportunities for transferring pupils from one division to another. The system also offers superior advantages for adjusting pupils who have been absent six or eight weeks on account of serious illness." [1]

To aid in determining pupils to be placed in C, B and A divisions of the flexible grading system, three intelligence tests were given in the first semester of second grade. These were the Pintner-Cunningtham, Haggerty Delta I, and Otis Primary.

Before the teacher saw the I Q's resulting from these tests, she was asked to give her estimate of each pupil's inherent ability.

Other factors ascertained were the class record, health, effort and industry of the various pupils.

The complete data was tabulated. Then a conference was held by the principal, teacher, and tester. After a discussion of each pupil, the three groups were planned.

As progress was made through the grades readjustments would be made if warranted as the flexibility of such a

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[1] 1915 School Report, Beverly, Mass. Page 13

system would permit it.

When this plan was instituted it was hoped that the necessity of non-promotions would be small and nearly every pupil would be able to continue work without repetitions. The morale of those who had difficulty in progress would be much more satisfactory as the social disgrace of a non-promotion would be eradicated.

The superintendent claimed that "it is believed that this plan will enable some pupils to save time without omitting any part of the elementary course, while it gives others a better opportunity to acquire the essentials than is possible under the ordinary grading plan." [2]

[2] 1915 School Report Page 14

III. The Progress of the Flexible Grading System.

As we recheck on the material available to determine what the results were of this system, the progress made seems most satisfactory, particularly in cutting the number of non-promotions.

On page 12 of the superintendent's report of 1916 one year after the establishment of the system, we find the following statement:

"We have now had an opportunity to measure the results of one year's work under the new system. There were only 91 non-promoted pupils last year in the schools where the new system was in operation, compared with 302 non-promotions during the year 1914-15. This is a decrease of 211 or nearly 70%. 1013 pupils did a normal year's work. 248 pupils who received limited promotions lost an aggregate of 371 quarters, or 92 3/4 years of work; 261 pupils who received accelerated promotions gained 318 quarters of 79 1/2 years of work. These results when combined with the decrease in non-promotions in 1916 or 1915 give an aggregate gain of over 197 school years. This is equivalent to having 197 pupils accomplish two years of work in one year -- from two to five times as many as have received double promotions during the last three years -- under the former grading system. The new plan also makes it possible for pupils to take more time for a year's work,

if they need it; while those who move faster than the normal rate are not obliged to omit any part of the course of study as is necessarily the case when they are given double promotion."

In Chart #1 showing the advancement in June 1916 as compared with 1915, there is a significant result brought about by the new promotional system. This is shown also by Chart #2 which compares the non-promotions in June of both years.

There was a distinct falling off in retardation in the various schools in which the new system had been attempted.

The range in the percentage decrease ranged from 30% to 1080% as shown by Chart #7 in the School Report of 1916.

Like all other new educational propositions the flexible grading system presented some difficulties. In the superintendents report of 1916, Page 14, we find this statement:

"Just as a watch is more complicated and needs more careful handling than a sun-dial, but renders more valuable service to the owner, so the new system demands more careful oversight by principals and more discriminating judgment by teachers. In most schools it is also necessary for teachers to carry on a wider range of school work at one time. This latter is not an unmixed evil, however. We may find difficulty in maintaining a sufficient number of pupils in the

Chart #1

ADVANCEMENT IN JUNE *

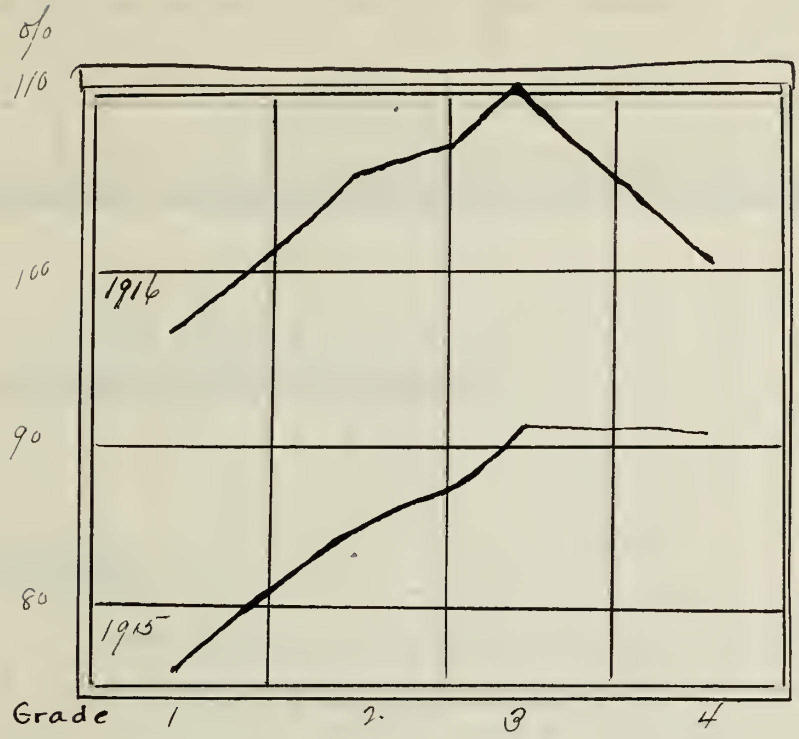
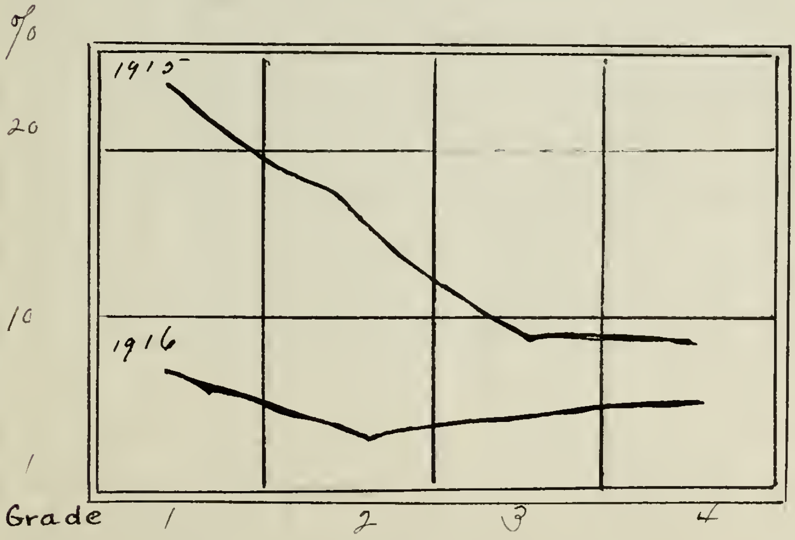


Chart #2

NON-PROMOTION IN JUNE *



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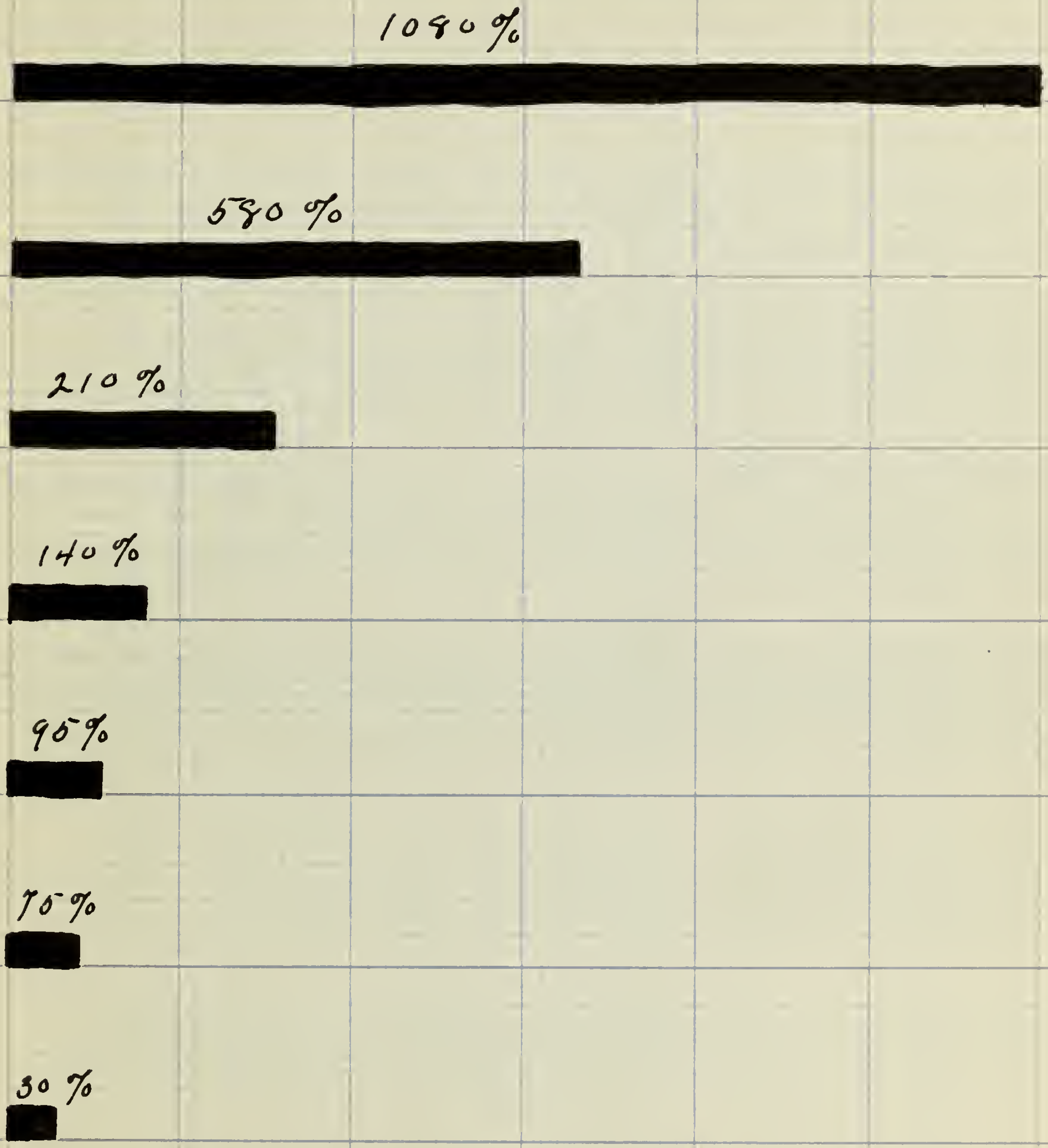
*Report of School Committee, Beverly, 1916 Page 13

Chart #3

DECREASE OF RETARDATION, 1915-1916 *



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* Showing percentages for each of the schools where the new grading system was in operation.

rapid divisions because of the fact that as these pupils move from the school district, it is not always possible to assign entering pupils to fill the vacancies. It is neither economical nor desirable to continue small divisions of five or six pupils."

In comparing the non-promotion figures in 1914-1915, 1915-1916, 1916-1917 we find some interesting developments.

In grades 1 to 4 during 1914-1915 there were 302 non-promotions, while in the year following the flexible grading system's establishment, we find that non-promotion had been reduced to 88. In 1916-17 this number of non-promotions had been reduced to 83. This figure shows a reduction of 73% over the 1915 figures of non-promotion. This reduction in non-promotion is most significant and in itself it is almost a justification for the establishment of the flexibility of promotion system.

Investigating further the report in 1917 showed that 91.67% of pupils had gained some promotion under this new system as against 84.5% under the old plan.

In tabulating the percents of advancements in our school system, we find very definite evidence that our flexible grading system had minimized the non-promotions and that advancements by quarter years were given the pupils as their ability warranted such a promotion.

The figures tabulated in the following table as worked

out by the writer present very interesting results of our flexible system in the first six grades of our school system.

Year	Pupils	Grades Involved	Non-Promotions	Quarters Advanced	Percent of Advantage
1916	1630	1-5	91	6107	93.6
1917	2080	1-6	88	7762	93
1918	2229	1-6	88	8578	96.24
1919	2376	1-6	109	8910	94.8
1920	2368	1-6	94	8891	93.8
1921	2411	1-6	112	8962	92.9
1923	2475	1-6	119	9212	93.05
1924	2545	1-6	99	9454	92.9
1928	2146	1-6	58	8233	97.06
1929	2064	1-6	92	7750	93.8

The percents of advancements as the above tabulations show is satisfactory. It should be noted that in 1928 and 1929 the number of quarters advance had decreased greatly, due perhaps to the study made by the school committee in 1928 which study pointed out that there should be closer supervision of those pupils accelerated and a recommendation that more adjustment should be made in the group.accelerated.

Thus in reviewing the report of the pupils accelerated in 1929 I find that only 147 pupils gained five quarters work against 241 pupils in June,1923. This decrease in the number of pupils accelerated showed 61% decrease. Further in 1928 the records show that 163 pupils gained five quarters advancement in one year instead of the four quarters

while in 1921 the record shows that 261 pupils gained the extra quarter year. Here again the 1928 accelerations show a decrease of 62% over the 1921 accelerations.

To the writer, the facts presented in this table seem to show that the flexibility of promotion in our grades was now being conducted in a more cautious manner in that there was a much more careful selection being made as the decrease in the number of those selected for acceleration in 1928 and 1929 was very pronounced.

IV. Special Study by James T. Gearon in 1925.

Since the organization of the flexible grading system in Beverly in 1914, there had been some questions raised by those of us in the educational system as to the advisability of continuing such a flexibility of promotion.

The writer at the time was serving as Student Advisor in the Beverly High School, a position which brought him in personal contact with the students of the schools.

Those pupils who had difficulties in high school studies, those who were planning for college or higher institutions of learning, came to the office for advice concerning present and future problems.

It was this contact with the pupils' high school records and school problems which caused the writer to pause and study the composite view of the various classes in the high school and to raise the question:

> "Haven't we too many pupils who have been accelerated in the grades, finding high school work difficult?"

As I viewed the situation I found that in the Beverly High School in 1925 there was a total of 231 so-called "C" pupils on a total enrollment of 1225 pupils. These facts showed that 18.8 percent of the school had been accelerated.

In the Senior Class, which contained 55 "C" pupils out of an enrollment of 257 we find that only two pupils were

carrying an average of B/, six a B, five a B- and eight a C/, sixteen C and eighteen D.

It is rather unusual to find that pupils who had relatively superior ability in the lower grades and accomplished six years of work in five years are now doing but average work in high school studies. The fact that eighteen of these accelerants are doing very poor work, namely of D average which is between 65 and 70% seems to justify the questions as raised.

Out of 278 pupils in the Junior Class I noted that fifty pupils or 17.7% were "C" pupils and the average attainments of this group seemed unsatisfactory. One pupil had an average of A, while there were two B averages, six B-'s, eight C/'s, eighteen C-'s, thirteen D's and two E's. Here it was noted that two accelerants had failed and thirteen received a D average which of course is very poor, being just barely passing.

Studying further in the Sophomore class with an enrollment of 345, there were 56 accelerants, or 16% of the class. The averages obtained by this group compared with those of the two upper classes. There were two A's, two A-'s, three B/'s, five B's, two B-'s, seven C/'s, twenty C's, fourteen D's and one E or failure.

In the freshmen class which had an enrollment of 385 we found that seventy or 18% were "C" pupils. There were

no failures and the D's were very few, six in number. Twenty-nine D's, fourteen C's, nine B-'s, four B≠'s, two A's. The foregoing averages show that the accelerants of the freshmen class were doing better work as a group than the other three classes.

In studying the Chart #4 and Chart #5 it seems rather unique that there should be fifty-one accelerants doing D work and eighty-three doing C or average work. To the writer, this large number seemed out of all proportion for a bright group.

With the foregoing facts before us, the principal and myself did raise the question that there seemed to be many of the "C" pupils doing work much below their ability, if they had been accelerated due to ability to accomplish more than is required regularly in the grades.

With the question raised within the school system for the first time, Mr. Gearon made a very excellent contribution to those of us interested, by making a study of the distribution of marks of all pupils in comparison with the "C" pupils' marks.

Chart #6 shows a total of 5733 marks for a period of five years. This five year period included marks of two graduating and three undergraduate classes. The curve of marking is almost a balanced one, but it shows that 546 marks were failures, that is below 65% and the large number

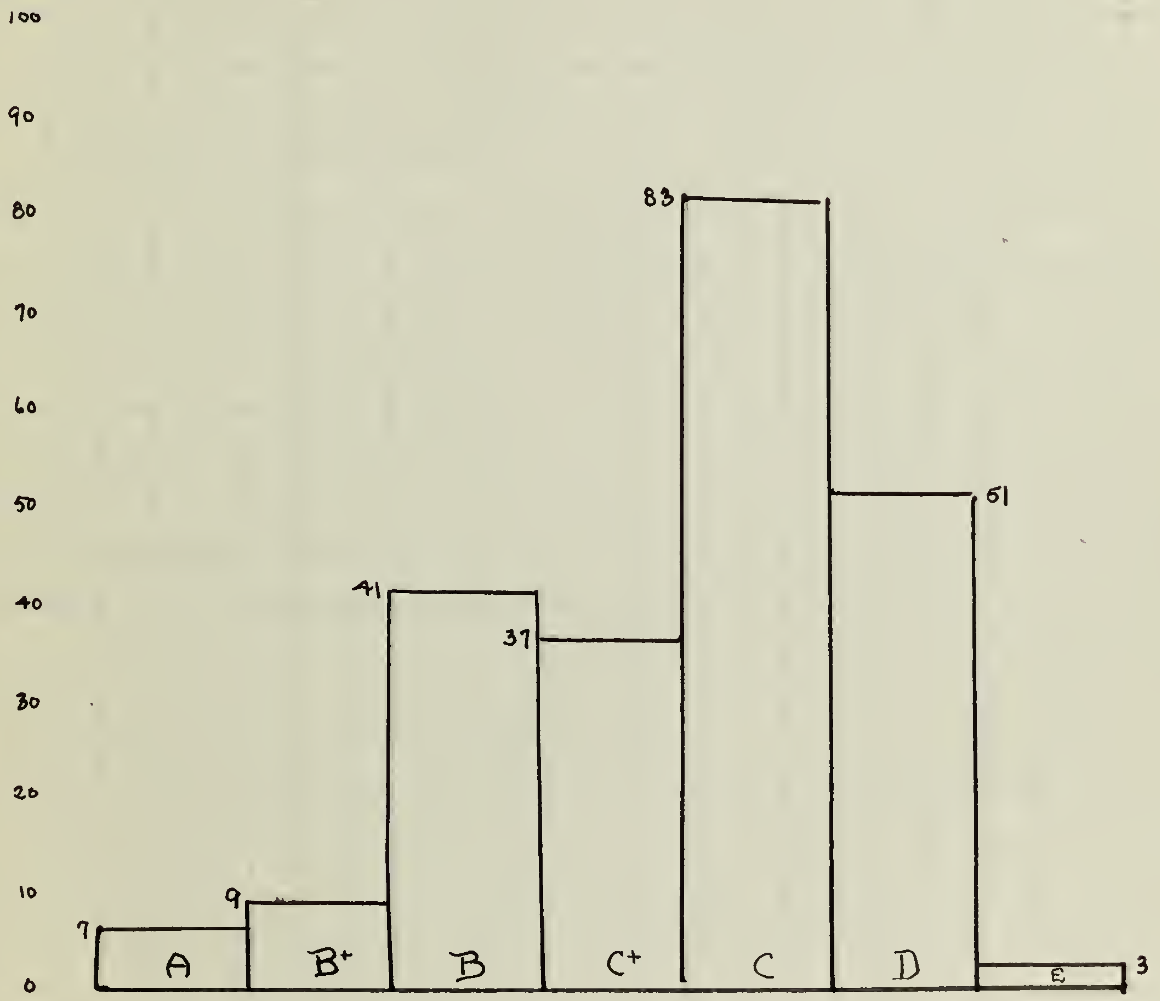
Chart #4

"C" PUPILS ACADEMIC AVERAGES IN 1925

Academic Averages	Seniors	Juniors	Sophomores	Freshmen	Total
A		1	4	2	7
B+	2		3	4	9
B	11	8	7	15	41
C+	8	8	7	14	37
C	16	18	20	29	83
D	18	13	14	6	51
E		2	1	-	3
	55	50	56	70	231

Chart #5

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC AVERAGES OF "C" PUPILS IN 1925



of 1603 marks were a D or just passing (65% to 69%).

In studying Chart #7 which gives the distribution of the foregoing marks as they were registered against "C" pupils or all other pupils we find that the accelerated group surpassed the regular group in acquisition of good marks and the median score, which was 71% for regular pupils and 76% for "C" pupils.

It is interesting to note that the "C" pupils registered 5.6% of failures against 10.2% for the regulars, 18.9% of D's against 29.6% for the regular group. The accelerated group show 39.4% or average mark against 40.8% for the regular and in the two higher grades the "C" group surpasses the regulars having 29.5% B averages against the regulars, 16.2% and 6.4% A averages against 3% for the regulars. This chart shows clearly that the "C" pupils group received much better marks than all the other groups.

In reviewing this study we must not lose sight of the fact that in the opposite group which is compared with the "C" group are many pupils who have been retarded and overage and are naturally slow in mental reaction to high school work.

This chart strictly interpreted shows that for this five year period, that most of the "C" group have done well and have succeeded academically in the high school but once more the study causes the question to be raised whether or

Chart #6

DISTRIBUTION OF ALL MARKS FOR FIVE YEARS

Total ~ 5733

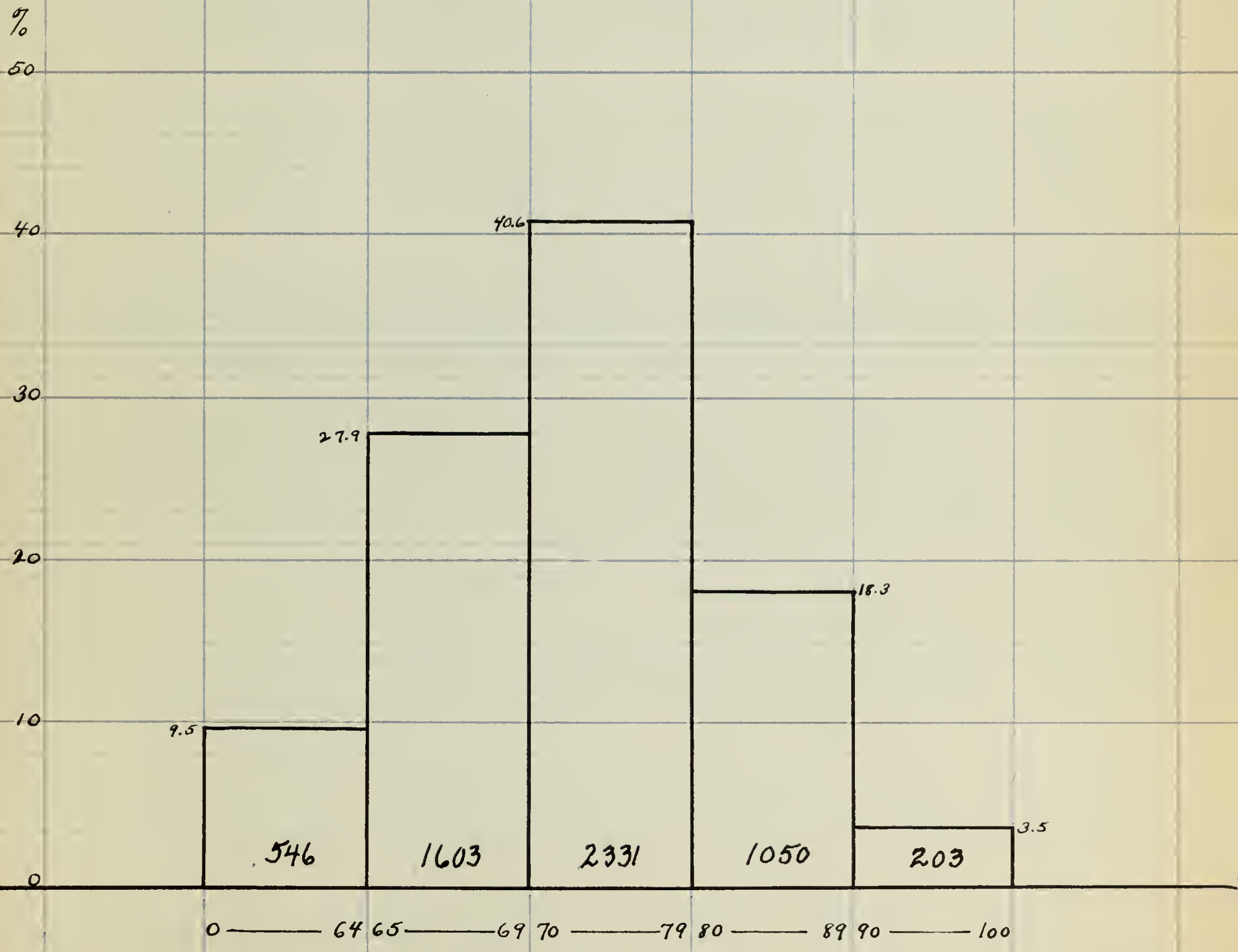


Chart #7

DISTRIBUTION OF ALL MARKS FOR REGULAR AND "C" PUPILS

Full Lines for Regular Pupils
Dotted Lines for "C" Pupils

Median Scores for Regular Pupils – 71
Median Scores for "C" Pupils – 76

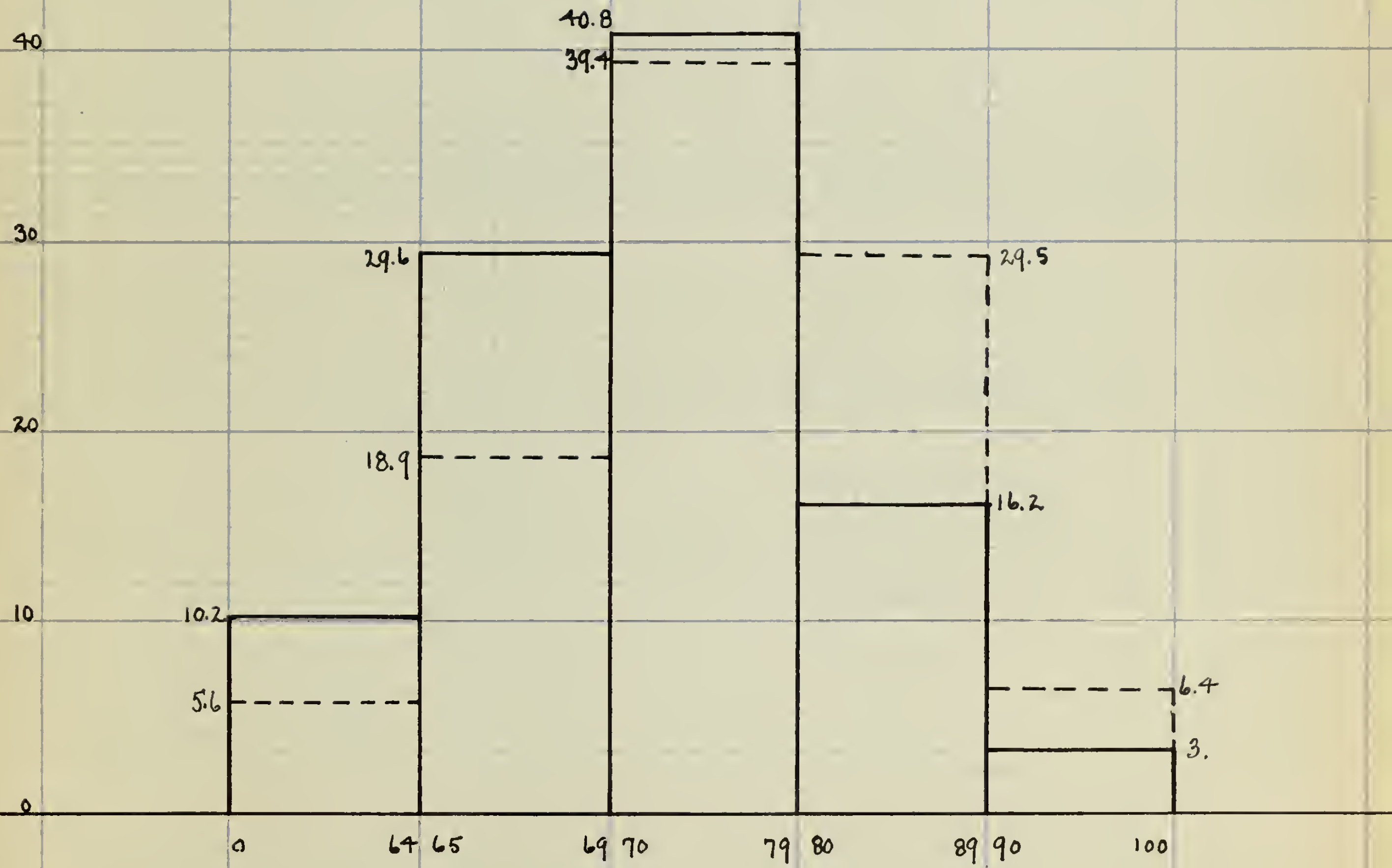


Chart #8

DISTRIBUTION OF ENGLISH MARKS FOR ALL REGULAR AND "C" PUPILS

Median Scores for Regular Pupils - 70
Median Scores for "C" Pupils - 74

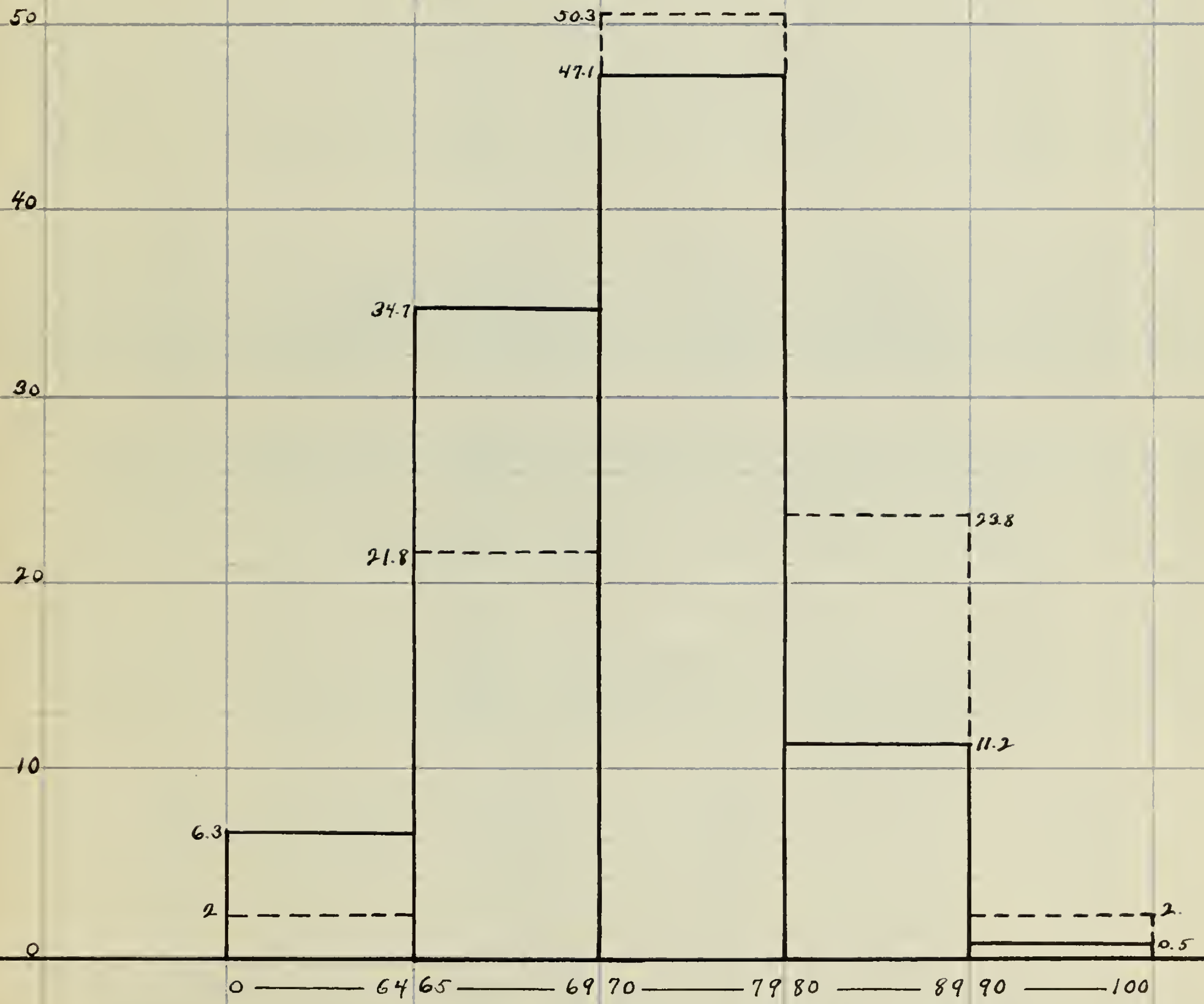
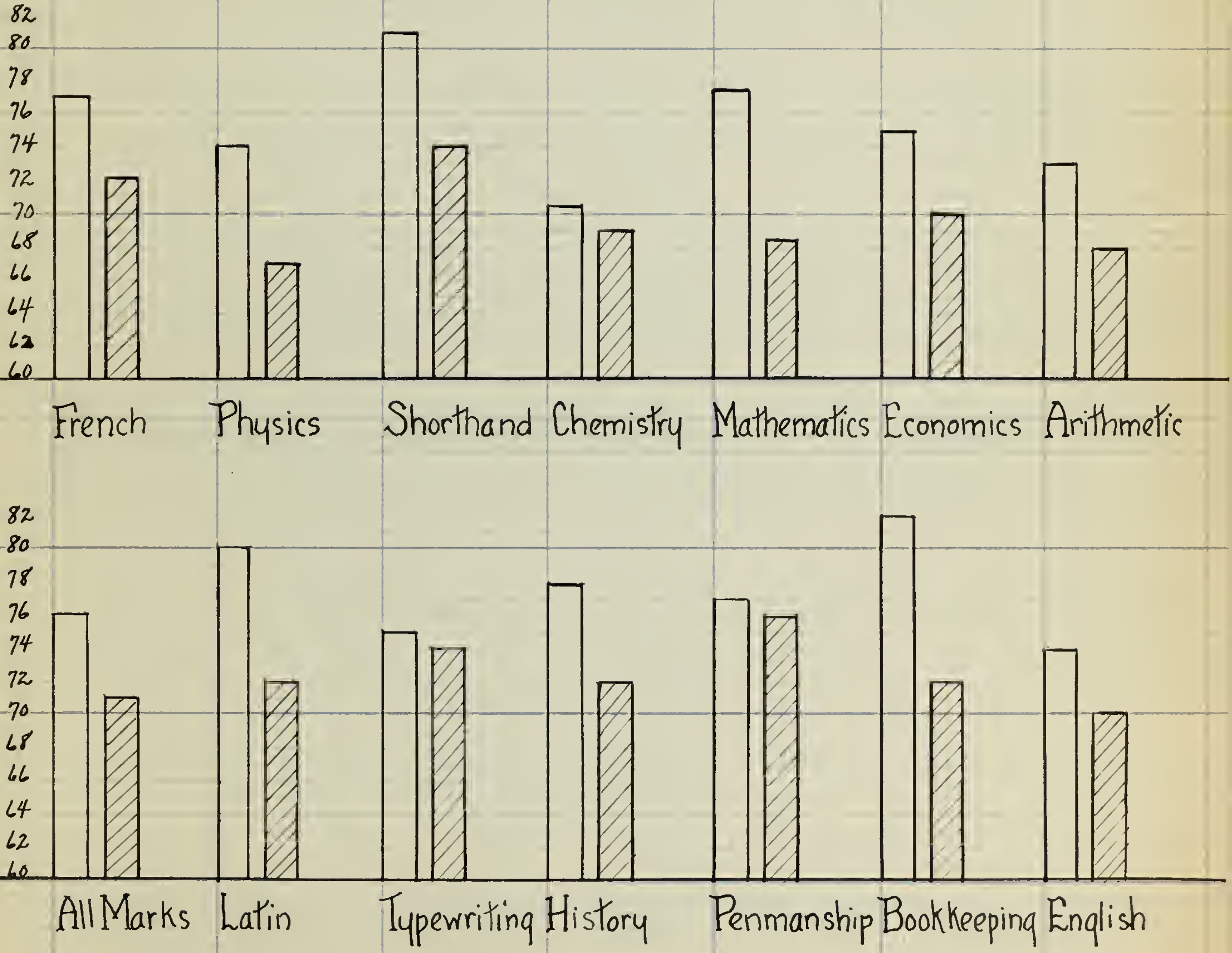


Chart #9

MEDIAN SCORES

Hatched Columns for Regular Pupils
Outlined Columns for "C" Pupils



not there should be so many failures or near failures in a "C" group.

Chart #8 showing the English marks, a subject which was required by all pupils gives the same story as interpreted in the previous charts.

Chart #9 giving the median scores sums up very well the situation in five years of marks for the groups in question.

This study by Mr. Gearon was most worthwhile, as it was the first attempt to actually study and compare the results academically of the accelerated and regular groups in the high school studies. The study further proves conclusively that "C" pupils as a group have done better work in every high school study than all other groups.

After the study was completed I was urged to investigate many individual cases of failures in the "C" groups. In some cases, I was impressed that, regardless of acceleration, the individual would perhaps have done poor school work due to personal indifference, still on the other hand I was convinced that an early readjustment in the grades of some of these already accelerated pupils, would have insured a more successful career.

The principal and myself advocated strongly a much more careful selection and follow-up of pupils accelerated as Mr. Gearon's study could be accepted and interpreted as sending us this message.

V. Report of Sub-Committee on the Flexible Grading System December 28, 1928.

Again in 1928 there seemed to be certain definite objections among some members of the school committee with reference to the success of the flexible grading system.

A committee consisting of Mrs. Elizabeth Woodbury, and Mr. Arthur Collier with Mr. Harry Tucker as chairman, made a careful study.

By careful consultation and study of the problem in the leading magazines and text books which dealt with segregation of pupils according to ability, and after personal conferences with all of the principals of the schools, a definite conclusion was arrived at.

The main proposition which this committee undertook to prove was "that pupils were too young on entering and graduating from High School - further that they were immature when entering High School and that a certain amount of fundamental training was lost in the grades."[1]

With regard to the first question the committee found that:

"In the entering class of the year 1915 there were four pupils ten years old; in 1928, none; in 1915, forty pupils eleven years old; in 1928, twelve; in 1915, one hundred thirty-seven pupils twelve years old; in 1928, one hundred fifteen; in 1915, one hundred twenty-five pupils thirteen

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[1] Report of Sub-Committee on Flexible Grading System - Beverly

years old; in 1928, one hundred eighty-six; in 1915, forty-five pupils fourteen years old; in 1928, seventy-nine; in 1915, thirty-nine pupils fifteen years old, and in 1928 seven. In the seventeen group, 1915 has two and 1928 none.

In the ten and eleven year group, we find a decrease of thirty-two; in the twelve and thirteen year group, which we feel safe in calling the normal group, as it contains by far the largest percentage, we find an increase of thirty-nine.

In the fourteen and fifteen year group, we find an increase of thirty-seven and in sixteen and seventeen year group, a decrease of ten.

The youngest pupils in the seventh grade are eleven years, three months, who if they continue without interruption will graduate from High School at the age of sixteen years and three months.

The oldest pupils in the seventh grade are sixteen years, four months, who if they continue as at present, should graduate from High School at twenty-one years and four months.

The median age is twelve years, nine months, making graduation from the High School possible at seventeen years and nine months.

The average age of the regular group in the seventh grade is twelve years and eleven months, and they should

graduate at seventeen years and eleven months.

The average of pupils in the flexible group is thirteen years and eight months and they should graduate at an average age of eighteen years and eight months.

Assuming the same mental and physical endowments for all pupils who enter at the age of five years and six months, the ideal standard for graduation from High School should be seventeen years and four months.

Of our present eighth grade pupils, one hundred ten pupils -- slightly less than twenty-five percent -- can reach this standard. If they do so, it is essential that conditions shall be ideal.

Of the one hundred ten pupils who equal or better this standard eighty-eight do so by a period of four months or less.

The following are the possible High School graduation ages of those who are in the present eighth grade:

16-17	years	47	pupils
17-18	"	209	"
18-19	"	111	"
19-20	"	54	"
20-21	"	15	"
21-22	"	5	"

In a large eastern city, the chances of graduation were very poor under the best of conditions because only twenty-three percent of the youngest pupils entering graduated, and of the children entering at a more advanced age, only three

and five tenths percent graduated.

In a large western city, their chances were much better. Because of the children entering young, sixty-five percent graduated, and of children who entered at a more advanced age, seventeen percent graduated. For while the percentages of graduates differed greatly in the two cities, the relation of percentages was very close."[2]

Continuing its finding, the special report shows "In the graduating class of 1928, (two hundred forty-three pupils,) thirty-three entered the seventh grade as "C" pupils; twenty-two of whom were "C" pupils from the second grade and ten were shifted from "A" to "B" groups at various times during their elementary school course. Sixty-six pupils went through the grades as "B" pupils without change.

The flexibility of our system is shown by the fact that some pupils in these seven years in the first six grades, were in five different groups, shifted as follows: B-1; C-1; B-3; A-1; B-1.

While sixty-six pupils completed the six grades in the "B" group in six years, eighty-five other pupils by shifting from group to group also did the required work in six years.

We find only eighty-eight pupils out of two hundred and forty-three graduating, who covered the required work without shifting from group to group.

Computation shows the average time taken to complete

[2] Report of the Sub-Committee on Flexible Grading System in Beverly.

the six grades was five years, eleven months, and fifteen days.

The average age of graduation has been computed as seventeen years and eight months -- an average of four months over what we considered elsewhere as an ideal and a few months under the average graduation age in the United States."[3]

It was the privilege of the writer to appear before this special committee to report the situation in his particular school, the seventh and eighth grade building.

A survey was made in the school to find out how many pupils had been accelerated and to show their standing academically.

Before the facts were presented to the faculty of the school, each member of the same was asked to express his impressions concerning those pupils who had been accelerated.

It is interesting to note the opinions expressed by a few of those teachers. The following quotations are typical of the teachers' attitude:

"I do not approve of the "C" grading system for the following reasons:

1. I have seen too many so-called "C" children come into the seventh and eighth grades utterly beyond their depths in Arithmetic, floundering around, doing poor work, worried and unhappy.

[3] Report of Sub-Committee on Flexible Grading System in Beverly.

1928 Graduating Class
Beverly High School 243 Pupils [4]

A-B-C- divisions-giving number of years in each grade from first to sixth.

Div. and No. of Yrs. Therein	Total Years Required	Classification of Pupils at Completion of Gr. 6
B	66 x 6 yr.	66 B
B-1; A-1; B-2; A-3	7 "	1 A
B-1; A-1; B-4	4 x 6 "	4 B
B-1; A-1; B-5	7 "	1 B
B-1; A-2; B-4	6 x 7 "	6 B
B-1; A-2; B-5	2 x 8 "	2 B
B-1; A-6	7 "	1 A
B-1; C-1; B-3; A-1; B-1	7 "	1 B
B-1; C-1; B-4	2 x 6 "	2 B
B-1; C-2; B-3	2 x 6 "	2 B
B-1; C-2; B-4	3 x 7 "	3 B
B-1; C-3	2 x 4 "	2 C
B-1; C-3; B-1	7 x 5 "	7 B
B-1; C-3; B-2	6 "	1 B
B-1; C-4	17 x 5 "	17 C
B-1; C-4; B-1	6" "	1 B
B-1; C-5	2 x 6 "	2 C
B-2; A-1; B-3	2 x 6 ""	2 B
B-2; A-1; B-4	7 "	1 B
B-2; A-2; B-4	8 "	1 B
B-2; A-3; B-3	8 "	1 B
B-2; A-4; B-1	7 "	1 B
B-2; A-4; C-2	8 "	1 C
B-2; C-1; B-3	2 x 6 "	2 B
B-2; C-3	6 x 5 "	6 C
B-2; C-3; B-1	6 "	1 B
B-3; A-1; C-2; B-1	7 "	1 B
B-3; C-2	5 "	1 C
B-4; A-2; B-1	7 "	1 B
B-4; C-3	7 "	1 C
B-3; A-1; B-2	6 "	1 B
B-1; A-2; C-3	6 "	1 C
A-2; C-4; B-1	7 "	1 B

Number of years required to complete 6 grades:
4 yrs.-2; 5 yrs-31; 6 yrs-85; 7 yrs-19; 8 yrs-5.

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[4] Special Age Chart in Sub-Committee Report on Flexible Grading System.

Average time to complete 6 years--5 yrs. 11 mo. 15 days.

		Irregular Progress Transferred From				Regular Progress		
C-A	0		A-B	21		Always	B	66
C-B	22		B-C	8		"	C	22
B-A	1		A-C	2		"	A	0
	23	Retarded		31	Accelerated			88

AGE OF SEVENTH GRADE PUPILS IN JUNE

Years of age	10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		Total		Grand Total
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	
1915	2	2	22	18	64	73	59	66	25	20	22	17	10	5	2	0	206	201	407
1928			4	8	55	60	90	96	40	39	27	15	6	1			222	219	441

2. These same children might have been doing average work successfully in their own grade if they hadn't been pushed beyond their inherent ability.

3. The end of the second grade is too early to pick the superior child. He is judged on reading and a little number work, both of which are memory subjects in those grades. It is impossible to judge accurately the superior child without using as a basis his powers of thought and reasoning.

I consider it better for the morale of the child to do very good work in his own natural grade than to do average work even to make a year. The children are young enough now when they get to high school and out of high school to work if they go no farther."

Of the 48 "C" children in our seventh grade I have had only 16 this year.

Of those 16 - 4 are doing a little above the average, 3 are doing average, 7 are very low average, and 2 are doing very poor work.

It is interesting to note that some of our best children are not "C" children.

I think that the system can hardly be right, if only one out of three picked are "C" children. It does not seem quite fair to the other two.

I have found these facts to be true not only this year

but in the classes of some years past."

In a very careful checking I found that in Grade eight there were 31 "C" pupils who had gained one year by the acceleration process and forty pupils in grade seven making a total of seventy-one pupils advanced by means of the flexible grading system. This figure interpreted by percentage showed 12.6% of the school had benefited by this new system.

The thirty-one "C" pupils in grade eight had an average intelligent quotient of 118 and a scholarship average at the time of this study of 85.02%. The Chart # 10 shows the distribution of the I.Q.'s and academic averages of the accelerants of both grades seven and eight.

The forty "C" pupils in Grade seven showed an average of 86.27%.

It is interesting to note that those in grade eight were rated according to their native inherent ability as follows by their teachers:

A - 1
A- - 6
B+ - 3
B - 11
B- - 3
C+ - 6
C - 3

The averages were arrived at by using the following scale.

CHART SHOWING I.Q's AND CORRESPONDING SCHOLARSHIP

Grade 8

I.Q's	Scholarship Averages
135	94%
131	87
127	84.8
127	84.4
126	89.5
126	90.12
126	92.12
126	85.87
125	78.4
125	90.6
123	85.1
122	82.37
121	80.9
118	85.6
118	77.
*117	76.
116	87.6
116	91.9
116	80.7
116	81.5
115	84.6
115	85.9
113	90.
113	78.6
110	84.75
109	80.4
104	81.5
97	86.7
95	75.1

Grade 7

I.Q's	Scholarship Averages
162	91.9%
152	92.9
148	91.9
147	90.
144	87.3
143	91.7
139	89.2
138	92.
138	88.1
135	86.5
129	80.8
124	88.8
*123	90.7
116	83.7
114	85.6
113	81.1
112	85.1
111	87.7
110	81.8
109	85.4
106	82.
105	77.5
105	83.2
102	83.3
102	82.
99	83.2

*Median I.Q. - Grade 8 - 117

Median Scholarship Average
Grade 8 - 84.8

*Median I.Q. - Grade 7 - 123

Median Scholarship Average
Grade 7 - 86.5

N.B. 85% is considered satisfactory work for "C" pupils.

Pupil Rating Sheet

Teachers Note: Independent of the scholarship accomplishment of each of the pupils listed below, what is your best judgment of his or her inherent ability? Remember you are not necessarily rating the pupil on the basis of what he achieved in his class. Please use the following symbols very discriminatingly.

"A" To indicate the pupil of exceptional rapid mental reaction, keen, clear, perception and accelerated progress.

"B" Pupil who is well able mentally to maintain an average of "B" in College Preparatory work. Better equipped than the average in native intelligence.

"C" The average pupil, -- normal in mental reaction, keenness, and perception.

"D" Pupil who is below the average in mental capacity, - slow and sluggish in the power to grasp.

"E" The mentally deficient pupil, - retarded in reaction speed. Very slow.

In the grade seven group we find that the 40 "G" pupils received the following grades from their sixth grade teacher:

A	-	8
A-	-	14
B+	-	4
B	-	2
B-	-	7
C+	-	5

From these facts as studied, it seems that the majority of the pupils selected for acceleration have the ability to do the required work in spite of the fact that perhaps a few who have been selected fail to measure up to the high standards set by our schools.

The special committee after weighing carefully the pros

and cons of the principles involved and studying the opinions of the experts on ability grouping arrived at the following conclusions:

"1. That the so-called flexible grading system should be retained, as it offers at this time the best solution of our problem, (not admitting it is the proper solution as has been stated elsewhere in this report.)

2. We would recommend a closer supervision of the grading, because we feel there have been pupils advanced as "C" pupils who rightly belong in other classifications.

3. We believe that certain restrictions should be made in the "C" groupings. A possible reduction of twenty to twenty-five percent might safely be made. Further, that the quality of the child's work depends upon other factors than intelligence, among which are health, regularity of attendance, degree of application, attitude toward teacher, emotional stability, amount of encouragement at home, etc. Mistakes in groupings are sometimes made. Just as soon as a teacher discovers a maladjustment it should be corrected by transfer to a class more suited to the pupil's capacity.

4. We find the amount of fundamental training lost is negligible and, in most cases, nothing is lost. On the question of immaturity upon entering High School, we find that this is biological and not a matter of age or mental development.

VI. Study of Progress of ~~an~~ Equal Number of Pupils From a Regular Group Having Approximately the Same Ability as a "C" Group.

To complete this discussion of the accelerated system of promotion in Beverly, the writer has made a comparative study of two groups of pupils, one group having been accelerated and the other group having completed the work of the first six years in the required time.

These ninety-two pupils, forty-six in each group, graduated from the Briscoe School in June, 1925, and entered the Beverly High School in September, 1925. The forty-six pupils in the "C" group, as we will refer to them completed the first six grammar grades in five years, while the forty-six in the "R" group as we will refer to them completed the same six grades in the regularly allotted time, namely six years. This "R" group was chosen at random, but showed evidence of having approximately the same ability.

In considering the records of these two groups in grade eight, especially reviewing the teacher's estimate of their native inherent ability, the "C" group (accelerants) show many with low ratings. It was evident that after these children had been accelerated their teachers felt that some of their abilities were on the lower part of the scale.

It should be noted that in the "C" group there are more of A ability in this group than we found in the "R" group.

Teachers' Rating of Abilities in 1925 in Grade Eight.

Ratings	"C" Group	"R" Group	
A	10	6	
B+	7	7	
B	15	17	
B-	4	5	Average Line
C+	2	1	
C	3	6	
C-	-	1	
D+	5	2	
D	-	1	

Academic Average in 1925

Numerical Range in Percent	"C" Group	"R" Group
90 to 100	5	3
85 to 89	14	10
80 to 84	13	15
70 to 79	10	17
Below 70	1	1

The data on page 56 concerning the academic averages in grade eight, 1925, shows that the "C" group made a little better showing than the "R" group. However, it is well to note that there were eleven accelerants who were doing work below B grade. Although the cause for this poor showing by pupils of supposedly good ability cannot be traced to their fast promotion in the first six grades, it shows evidences that some accelerants were not accomplishing as much as one should expect them to, especially when these individuals were rated so highly.

We follow these same pupils through the four years of high school and the academic records show us some interesting facts. In selecting the studies for the comparison, only those studies which required outside preparation and those like typewriting which were necessary for commercial work were considered. We recorded the final year's averages in English, mathematics, (including bookkeeping) sciences, (including physics, chemistry, physical geography and biology), commercial subjects (stenography, office appliances), social studies, (historics, civics, commercial law), Latin, French, and German.

As we study the averages as compiled under the different headings, we are inclined to feel satisfied that the "C" group has done better academic work than the "R" group. Again we see that those "C" pupils who did poor work in

the Briscoe School were having difficulty in some high school studies, particularly mathematics and the languages.

The summary table, comparing all the averages of these "C's" and "R's" shows that the former received an A average seventy-five times against forty-two for the latter group. Following the summary further, we see that the "R" group registered 263 B averages against 238 for the "C" group, also that the "R" group made a total of 134 C and E averages against 71 for the "C" group. Again it must be noted, that D and E work in high school is not satisfactory work for a group of accelerants.

Studying the high school records further, we find that of the original forty-six pupils in the "C" group, thirty-eight received their high school diplomas, while forty-five of the "R" group graduated. Of the two pupils in the regular group who failed to graduate one failed in English in the Junior and Senior year and has now matriulated at a preparatory school while the other left school in the senior year because of sickness at home.

Of the eight pupils who did not finish high school with the "C" group we find that five did not enter high school, one due to illness and the other four having moved out of the city. One pupil left school in March of the Senior year due to a poor scholarship record and the remaining two, one in the Sophomore year and the other in the Junior year,

Summary of Academic Averages

	"C" Group	"R" GROUP
A	75	42
B	238	263
C	290	397
D	58	112
E	13	22

Averages Obtained by "C" and "R" Groups in High School Subjects

English	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
A	3	1	2	2	-		-	
B	16	19	11	9	14	12	17	11
C	20	21	24	35	23	35	18	29
D	1	6	2	2	2	1	2	28
E	-	0	-	1	-	0	-	1

Mathematics								
A	7	3	3	2	5	1	-	4
B	15	19	7	8	11	27	16	12
C	15	19	13	28	7	17	7	13
D	3	4	10	7	3	8	2	4
E	-	2	6	4	0	0	0	2

Science								
A	2	0	-	0	1	0	-	1
B	8	6	1	1	7	3	10	10
C	13	14	3	7	18	18	11	7
D	3	6	1	1	1	4	1	4
E	1	0	-	0	-	0		1

Black "C" Group
Red "R" Group

Commercial Subjects

A	--		3	4	3	0	7	3
B	--		3	6	12	13	8	15
C	--		7	5	16	25	15	13
D	--		2	1	2	3	4	12
E	--		1	1	-	3	-	1

History

A	4	3	2	1	5	2	5	5
B	10	13	8	11	7	15	17	19
C	4	8	10	16	18	26	4	10
D	1	1	2	2	3	11	1	5
E	-	0	-	0	2	3	1	0

Black "C" Group
Red "R" Group

Latin

A	6	6	1	0	0	0	1	
B	7	6	4	5	3	2	3	3
C	10	10	9	9	6	5	1	0
D	0	2	3	3	0	2	1	2
E		1	2	1	0		0	

French

A	--		2	1	2	0	1	1
B	--		2	4	7	6	8	4
C	--		18	9	10	11	5	7
D	--		3	9	0	1	2	2
E	--		-	1	-	0	-	0

German

A	--		--		-			1
B	--		--		4	3	1	1
C	--		--		1		1	
D	--		--			1		
E	--		--					

Black "C" Group

entered a preparatory school. One of these last two mentioned pupils left the high school due to poor scholarship, while the other decided to attend a religious preparatory school.

Of this group of "C" pupils we find that six have returned to the high school for post graduate work, thus losing the year gained by acceleration. In talking with the parents of these children who had returned for the post graduate work, I was enlightened as to the reasons for taking such a course.

February 25, 1931

My dear Mr. Cronin:

You asked me to tell you why my daughter is taking a post-graducate course, The answer is because she was graduated at the tender age of 16 years and two months, and was too immature to do anything else.

If you would be interested in a layman's point of view I should like to tell you how this happened: In her first school year her principal came to me and said that ________ should be advanced to the "C" grade and thereby do five year's work in four. She was very emphatic about this and I was equally gullible.

All went well until a few years later when arithmetic got beyond the primary grades, and then along came geography and history. She was too much of the small child to take an interest in these more advanced subjects. It was pitiful to watch her struggle with her home work. If the answers could be learned by rote, all well and good. From then until she graduated she had to work hard and got, on the whole, barely passing marks. The worst phase of this was in the fact that she got what I call "the losing habit". She was so badly swamped in those first years of more advance work that she became calloused to failure.

This year she is working harder than ever before but she gets real enjoyment from her lessons. In fact she almost made the honor roll. It is the first time since quitting the primary grades that she has been able to rise up on a level with her studies and tackle them with confidence and understanding.

To sum it up, I think the system of selecting advanced pupils purely from ability in first grade work is wrong. Also, it is poor economy to rush a child through school only to have the extra year added on at the tail end.

Yours very truly," [1]

The foregoing letter seems to express the feeling of the parents who find their children did not do so well after acceleration.

The following letter expressed the other reaction to the acceleration program of promotion in Beverly:

"My dear Mr. Cronin:

I am very glad to outline our experience with the Beverly school system as applied to our daughter ________.

________ started school at the Hardie School in September, 1919. Under the system in vogue she completed her first five years training in four years. We watched her carefully for signs of tiredness or nerve strain but found she was going along easily, standing well in her classes and thoroughly enjoying her school life. When she was eight years old we added piano study to her activities and a year later she wanted to study the 'cello so that she could join the school orchestra which was then being formed.

This meant a few more hours of study each week, but she seemed to thrive on the work and her standing in school did not suffer.

This program was carried through the eighth grade at Briscoe where she took part in many school activities and had a high

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[1] An exact copy of a letter addressed to the author.

rank in her studies.

She entered the Beverly High School in September, 1926, taking the College Preparatory course and carried first honors during her entire course of four years, graduating in 1930.

During her high school course she was a member of the school orchestra for four years, besides taking a leading part in all the school's extra curricular activities.

In addition to her school work music took up a considerable amount of time, she playing professionally in a trio during the entire four years and devoting one night each week to practice with a string quartet.

During the junior and senior years in High School she tutored regularly on high school subjects and since the beginning of her senior year has worked as cashier in the local First National market on Saturday afternoons.

She entered Radcliffe last September, her course consisting of English, History, French and a double course in German. Her marks for the first semester are very satisfactory.

She is an active member of the Radcliffe Choral Society, which takes three hours per week in addition to her other college work, and she is still carrying on all of her outside activities and the doctor says her condition is perfect.

In looking back over the past twelve years both her mother any myself feel that our experience with the Beverly School system, as far as ________ is concerned, is a very pleasant one.

Yours sincerely," [2]

The opinions of parents seem equally divided. One group feels that its child is too immature graduating from high school, while the other group feels that the acceleration was justified.

It was difficult to compare the groups in their social activities, because in some cases the records were not com-

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[2] An exact copy of a letter addressed to the author.

plete and available. However, in reviewing the data at hand, we noted that thirteen of the "R" group were reported as not taking part in any activity other than school work while ten of the "C" group had not been recorded as joining in any of the extra-curricula activities during the four years. The "C" group provided the Vice-president of the Senior class and the Secretary of the Senior class, while the class Treasurer was a member of the "R" group. Although the foregoing fact may not have a great deal of bearing on the subject at hand, it shows that the class selected some of its leaders from the "C" group. It was noted that the members of each group joined the same type of activities. Sixty-six activities were participated in by the "R's" and sixty-one by the "C's". In this case, it should be taken into account that the "R" group was larger than the "C" group.

We are interested to find out what happened to these groups after the high school course was completed.

	"R" Group	"C" Group
College of Art Schools	11	7
Nursing	5	
Commercial of Secretarial Work	5	4
Agricultural School	1	
Preparatory School	1	1
Married	1	
Did Not Graduate	1	2

	"R" Group	"C" Group
Post Graduate	1	6
Employed		
Auto Mechanic		1
Bank Messenger	1	
Newspaper Reporter	1	
Carpenter Work	2	1
Masonry Work	1	
Mother's Helper		1
Gardening	1	
Office Work	1	7
Postal Telegraph Office	1	
Store Clerk	1	3
Unemployed	10	5
Unknown	1	1

The reports available concerning the follow-up show that the groups have continued in about the same lines of endeavor. The outstanding point seems to be the number of unemployed in the regular group, which is the result of the prevailing unemployment situation, while the number who returned for more work at the high school in a postgraduate course seems to be significant in the accelerated group.

It is interesting to note that a somewhat similar study as the one of the writer was made by Earl M. Haney of the Washington High School, Wisconsin and Willis L. Uhl of the

University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. These two students studied the academic records of seventy-four accelerated who had qualified fully to enter the College of Letters and Science of the University of Wisconsin as regular students.

Haney and Uhl point out that the seventy-four pupils selected for study were chosen because of the fact that these students were at the age of 16 1/2 years when qualified to enter the University.

In the conclusions of the study some interesting statements were made by Haney and Uhl as the following quotation shows:

"Several types of acceleration have been found: early entrance, skipping of grades, and carrying of more than the regular amount of school work in the high school. No students attended schools which provide any form of the 'multiple track' system for pupils of different abilities. Special aid in the form of pre-school training, parental aid, or summer school sessions was given to a few of the accelerants.

It was impossible to obtain accurate records of the social life of these students while in the high school or the University. It seems, however, from the available information that they entered into as many social activities as the average student. In fact, the entire records of these students indicate that they are nearly, if not quite, normal

in everything except pedagogical age.

In spite of the disruption of work caused by skipping grades or otherwise completing more than a grade a year, all of these students were academically successful until after high school graduation. Great advantages might have accrued had proper guidance been administered, for it is clear that certain of these students were only accelerated and were not precocious. The records made in the university by these accelerants corroborate Terman's assertion which was referred to at the beginning of this paper. Of the students who presented superior high school records, all made either good or excellent records at the university. Of the students who presented mediocre or poor high school records, several were advised by the registrar at the time of entrance to the university to fortify themselves further by an additional year of high school work. Their university records show the wisdom of the advice.

More careful selection of students for acceleration would reduce, if not eliminate the academic failures which have been cited in this paper. So far as academic work is concerned, teachers and parents could safely advise certain students to finish school in less than normal time, but, at the present time, teachers and parents do not effectively guide children in this respect. At present, accelerants are likely to have gained time because of the ambition of

teachers or parents as well as because of superior capacities. As a consequence, the academic records indicate that in both the high school and the university, some accelerants are brilliant while others are only mediocre."

The academic records, the teachers' estimates and other data presented in this comparative study shows conclusively that the "C" group was chosen because of its relative superior ability as compared to the other pupils in the class, but that in this relatively superior group we found many students, who did not put into practice the ability which in the early grades seemed to be obvious.

For the five years of academic work the "C" group did better work as a group than the "R" group, but as has been pointed out previously, too many of the "C" group have done poor work.

In reviewing the teacher's estimate of the native inherent ability of the two groups we find, that here again the "C" group rates higher in ability than the "R" group. The teachers of the high school rated the remaining pupils in the two groups in the following manner:

Rating	"C" Group	"R" Group
A-	3	-
B	12	8
B-	7	4

Rating	"C" Group	"R" Group
C	17	28
C-	-	6

The opinions of the teachers after four years do not vary a great deal, except that there are fewer A's and B's and again seventeen C averages seem a great many for this group in that the rating C is interpreted to mean below average,

If we interpret the study in question, we can surely draw the conclusion that the majority of accelerants succeed academically and socially in the high school when their progress is compared to a group of regularly promoted pupils. However, we are bound to raise the question again that some of those accelerated failed to do even average work in high school and perhaps should have done the work of the elementary grades at a natural rate of speed. This statement perhaps cannot be proven, as one would say in refutation that perhaps the accelerants would do just the same type of work if promotion had been regular.

Professor Freeman of Chicago University is of the opinion "that grade-skipping and acceleration is not as detrimental as we sometimes have been inclined to think it, the result is dependent upon the ability of the pupil. Many pupils are allowed to skip grades who are not qualified to do so as measured by their later work." 3

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3 Freeman, Frank N. - Miscellaneous Experimental and Statistical Studies of Gifted Children - Page 218

Thus, it seems safe to conclude from the evidence studied that the accelerants do better work than the regularly promoted group and that many of those accelerated should have been transferred to a regular group in the elementary school, as later evidence in high school work bears out that poor work and failures do not coincide with the ability of children capable of receiving acceleration. Further, that in the social life of the school, the younger children or the "C" group were not social misfits but were active in all types of school activities.

VII. Summary

It seems obvious that the flexibility system of promotion is by no means new to the educational world. Even in Plato's day of teaching, these differences were recognized.

With the founding of our educational system a theory was prevalent that all men were created equal and that children therefore must be required to take the same education. This system of education, very pronouncedly violated the individualities of children even more than the old European countries' caste system.

However, when individual differences were first recognized, we find that the oldest methods employed by school administrators in treating these differences, particularly when these pupils displayed subnormal abilities, were to segregate these slow pupils in another part of the school building and apply new and different teaching methods for this newly recognized group. The differences, as displayed in bright pupils, were usually met in two ways; first, the bright children were promoted rapidly; and secondly, they were given a course of study generally referred to as enriched. The methods for handling brighter pupils followed some years later.

The education of the superior child at first depended

wholly upon the "verbal intelligence" of the child. This method of education was faulty because Rugg claims that in addition to the "verbal intelligence", children might be superior in "social intelligence", "mechanical intelligence" and "esthetic intelligence." Because of this discovery, it was advocated that the new program for caring for superior children should be broadened to include many aspects of culture instead of just the verbal aspect.[1]

As scientific psychology has improved the methods of testing for individual differences, it is now possible to educate each one according to his capacity of learning. It is now possible to conserve and develop the special aptitudes of every child regardless of race, sex, or circumstances, thus avoiding the humiliation and despair of chronic failure at prescribed tasks unsuited to the capacity of the child.

The Dalton Plan, the Winnetka Plan and Dr. Burk's plan of individual training have been recognized as successful systems of caring for the individual progress of children and making for a happier school life. The greatest criticism leveled at the foregoing systems is generally one of economy, as school administrators cannot provide the added funds for the additional costs.

In reviewing the Beverly system of flexibility of promotions, it seems that it has been most successful in

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[1] Rugg, Harold - The Twenty-third Yearbook. National Society for the Study of Education. Page 93

cutting non-promotions and providing for some of the relatively superior children to advance rapidly according to their ability and the slower ones to avoid the disgrace of non-promotions.

The comparative study of marks of "C" pupils with those of all other pupils, not only proved conclusively that the accelerants did better academic work as a group but also showed that there were a great many "C" pupils doing poor work and even failing work. This situation might have been avoided in some cases if the pupils had advanced in a regular way.

The School Committee Report of 1928 shows conclusively that children are not graduating from high school any younger under the flexible system of promotions. We find that this committee of 1928 recommended that the flexible grading be retained and a closer supervision of grading be adhered to because they felt that there have been "C" pupils advanced who belonged in other classifications, It is noted also that this report recommended that certain restrictions should be made in "C" groupings in that a reduction of a twenty to twenty-five percent could safely be made. The report stressed the importance of considering other factors than intelligence in selecting pupils for rapid advancement. These factors are health, regularity of attendance, degree of application, attitude toward teachers, emotional stability

and home conditions. On Page 29 of this study the figures for 1929 show conclusively that 147 pupils gained five quarters against 241 in 1923, a 61% decrease; thus showing that the recommendation of the school committee was being accepted and put into practice by the principals. The latest report of 1930 shows that 123 pupils gained five quarters a decrease of twenty-four under the previous year, again pointing out that a more careful selection of pupils is being made.

The study made by the writer of the progress of forty-six "C" pupils with forty-six "R" pupils through five years points out very decidedly that a more careful selection of "C" pupils would perhaps be beneficial to one-third of the group.

The writer feels that the flexible grading system is necessary in that the superior child must be cared for as well as the slow pupil.

In the future, it is suggested that the following considerations be foremost in the minds of the teachers and principals who are selecting the "C" group:

1. Physical growth and physiological age.
2. Intelligence tests records and the general mental development.
3. Educational tests, achievement and scholastic accomplishment.
4. Teacher's judgment and ratings.

After these four fundamental factors are weighed and the decision made to advance or retard a child, the principals and teachers should carefully check each year with achievement tests the accelerant's progress. Although the parents' influence plays a large part in keeping children in a "C" division after the child shows inability to keep up with this fast moving group, principals should demand the transfer, as the principal is the specialist and knows the proper prescription for the patient.

If the school authorities could afford the expense, it would be ideal to select those pupils who are "gifted" (135 I.Q.) and segregate them in a special room in a building located in the center of the city with a well qualified teacher to teach the group. It may be possible for some of the very superior children to do the regular work of the first eight grades in six years.

The theory advanced by Rugg, one of the foremost educational authorities in the country, shows the trend of present day thinking on the matter of training the individual. Rugg says:

"I believe that both from the standpoint of the development of each individual to the highest possible point and from the standpoint of the greatest contribution to the improvement of society, the gifted children in each town and city in our country should be discovered, organized into

working groups, and given the most far-reaching course of training our intelligence can organize. This includes not only those of great "abstract intelligence" but also prospective painters, musicians, humanitarians, leaders, inventors." [2]

The latest work from our National Commissioner of Education, Mr. William J. Cooper in a talk before the 1931 Detroit Meeting of the National Education Association, as reported in the Boston Evening Transcript of March 5, 1931 bears out again the present tendencies for the education of those of superior intelligence.

"Mr. William J. Cooper, United States Commissioner of Education, has reason for the almost pathetic plea that he made the other day before a branch of the National Education Association at Detroit in behalf of the mentally gifted child. Mr. Cooper estimates that out of every 5000 pupils in the schools of the nation, 200 are of unusually high intelligence ....Mr. Cooper thinks that there should be a school course which will challange the minds and develop the abilities of bright pupils. This idea is in accordance with propositions that have lately been broached for such a grading of school children as shall separate the goats from the sheep. (The goat by the way, is a much more intelligent animal than the sheep.) It is also in accordance with the system of education which prevailed in the country district school of

[2] Rugg, Harold - The Curriculum for Gifted Children Page 110

old. In that school, the pupil was in whatever class his nature and his tastes fitted him for. If he was a bright arithmetician he "ciphered ahead", and was in the first class in arithmetic, though he might be in the lowest class in grammar or geography. And vice versa. He had a chance to develop his mind along his own lines. There were no examinations, and there was no grading except according to natural tastes. When the pupil left the school to take up, perhaps at a tender age, the burdens of life, he at least had some store of the sort of knowledge that his head was built to carry. And all along through his brief course at school, his abilities, such as they were, had been keenly challenged. Nothing and no one had been holding him back."

It is possible that Mr. Cooper is not thinking of the youthful specialist of this type, but of the rare child whose abilities are, as it were, universal -- who can do anything and who ought to be able to shine in everything. It may be that we have in our schools today more of these all-around geniuses than there were in former days. But whether all-rounders or specialists, the bright boys and girls should not be suffocated by a wave of human dullness. Perhaps the principal school courses must and should be shaped for the benefit of the dullard, since we believe in majority rule. "God loves the morons; otherwise He would not have made so many of them." But there is no reason why they should be

permitted to run away with our whole system of education.

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